

Kingston Municipal Budget Committee
November 15, 2020 - Town Hall
Also Held Virtually via Videoconference (Zoom)

KMBC Members in Attendance:

Chuck Hart, Chair
Rick Russman, Vice Chair (attending virtually via Zoom)
Kim Donahue, Secretary
Marissa Federico, Recording Secretary
Gary Finerty
Heather Hanlon
James LaValley
John Pramberg
Annemarie Roth
Stanley Shalett
Kevin St. James, representative from the Board of Selectmen (BOS)

Absent KMBC Members:

Ray Donald

Other Parties Present: Kelley Binette, SoRock
Ernie Landry, Heritage Commission (via Zoom)
Brian Martin, Highway Department
Rebekka Maytek - Library
Tom Roughan, Highway Department
Charlotte Scott, SoRock
Rich St. Hilaire, Highway Department

No members of the public were in attendance.

Chuck called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes

Kevin moved to approve the minutes from the meeting on 11/4/20. Gary seconded. All in favor.

Budget-related Items

Chuck advised that the figures for the retirement benefits package are accurate per Cindy.

Kevin and Chuck spoke about the encumbrance of unspent funds, and Kevin stated this can only be done if there is a contract. Therefore, unspent funds cannot be carried over to the following year.

Conservation Commission - New Materials Received

In accordance with the Committee's request, Shaw of the Conservation Commission provided the requested backup for the payment of milfoil testing and treatment in 2020. The information received

showed the town's General Fund paid, so this does not show as an expense from the Conservation Commission's account. Chuck stated that Cindy is checking with the accountant to make sure this was paid through the Conservation Commission rather than the General Fund. The milfoil reserve fund is allowed to carry over unspent money, and the current balance is \$151. The balance of the Conservation Commission's account is still unknown. Kevin suggested the Committee's liaison check on this issue, and if there is enough money in this account to cover the milfoil budget for 2021, then it should be removed from the budget. This was agreed.

NEW BUSINESS

As Chuck emailed out the information for tonight's meeting to each member, there were no handouts necessary.

Chuck stated thus far, there has only been one line item change, Human Services, Part-time Salaries (4441-S1).

DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS

Highway Department

Rich went through his budget and highlighted changes. He explained that his department is unique as 75% of his budget is discretionary spending, and with the pandemic, the Selectmen have requested to use caution in spending this money. Therefore, he cautioned that the actual numbers should not be used for budgeting consideration for 2021.

He already has a part-time secretary budgeted but would like to make this position full time. This additional money is included in Salaries Part Time (4312-S3). This may require a warrant article and is still being discussed.

He noted there was an error on the budget, Clothing Allowance (4312-02). The figure was changed from \$15,000 to \$1,500.

As the dumpster rental is overbudget this year, the budget is higher for 2021. (4312-05)

The department needs a laptop and 2 iPads, so the budget for Office Equipment (4312-27) reflects this additional expense.

He stated that the budget for Storm Water Maintenance (4312-29) is accurate as all contracts have been signed. He added that the EPA is involved in this process, so it is important to avoid fines and manage stormwater responsibly. All drainage in town is included in this total. The town is part of the MS4 system which requires responsible stormwater management.

The budget for Seminars & Training (4312-21) is increased as there is a new employee.

As employees use personal phones for business use and in consideration of adding a new laptop and 2 iPads, the Telephone/Internet (4312-21) budget is increased.

The Tree Removal (4312-26) budget is low as there are 2 competent employees who are proficient with a bucket and a chainsaw.

Government Buildings

Rich also reviewed the Government Building budget. He reiterated that the actual numbers should not be used for budgeting consideration for 2021 as there is less discretionary spending due to the pandemic.

For Air Quality Testing (4194-29), it is anticipated that the Fire and Police Departments will need this service going forward, and in particular, he anticipates the need for an air quality study for the Fire Department in 2021.

He noted the budget for Heat & Service (4194-09) went down based on usage.

The budget for Paper and Cleaning Supplies (4194-19) has gone up due to the high need for masks, gloves, cleaning supplies for buildings, and decontamination materials. It is unsure how long government subsidies will continue, but the state should help as well under the CARES Act. The budget for Safety Equipment and Uniforms (4194-22) has gone up accordingly.

As with the Highway Department, the cost for Telephone/Internet (4194-16) has gone up also due to personal cell phone use for business.

Rick, the KMBC liaison, had no questions via Zoom.

Other Highway Streets & Bridges:

Rich stated for the most part this is level funded. The Block Grant (4319-02) budget is down as there are currently less people on the roads, but this may change based on the course of the pandemic.

Historical Museum

Stan did not receive a response from his contact. The budget is level funded. There were no questions.

Heritage Commission:

Ernie Landry was present via Zoom.

He noted that the budget for Matching Grants (4590-04) carries over each year for preservation projects. These grants may be a full grant or a 40% to 50% match.

The budget for Seminars & Training (4590-07) is increased partially due to the cost of hosting a multitown meeting with a guest speaker.

Library:

Rebekka handed out actuals as of 11/10/2020 as well as the proposed budget.

There are increases for both Part-time and Full-time Salaries (4550-S1 and 4550-S2). Referencing the salary figures of the Hampstead Wage Survey done among 15 towns in the surrounding area, the salaries in town were below the average. Therefore, after a discussion with the BOS, the library brought up employee salaries. They are currently short one full-time employee, but the budget figure for 2021 includes the proposed salary for a new hire. She believes a new full-time employee will be hired by the end of the 2020. She explained that currently, the employee count is 2 full-time and 3 full-time

equivalents with 6 part-time (all equating to under 4 full-time equivalents). There is a need for more desk staff due to COVID management. The current salary is about \$56,000 per full-time employee.

Due to the increase in salaries, Rebekka explained that the budget for the merit-based program, Pay for Performance (4550-S3), is reduced.

The Health and Dental Insurance budget (4550-02) is increased as library employees are currently in the open enrollment period, and this number must reflect the variety of coverage choices available to employees. Open enrollment is anticipated to end by mid-Dec. As the final numbers are not available yet, Cindy projects this information, so the budget of \$55,706 is an estimate. Any unspent budgeted money is put back into the town's General Fund. Rebekka explained the importance of offering various plans to employees based on their family circumstances and possible changes throughout the year.

Chuck asked if additional money needed for a change in family circumstances could come from discretionary spending. Rebekka stated there is no discretionary funding in the library's budget, and unspent funds must be returned to the General Fund.

Related to this discussion, Rebekka explained funds from the Trustees' Transfer Account (4550-04) go back into the operating account for payment of expenses. This is governed by NH RSA 202, not the town. The transfer fund balance currently unknown, but the town audited the account in April. Part of the increased budget for the Transfer Account is due to the salary of the outside bookkeeper for this account. Chuck stated Cindy usually handles this for other departments, but Rebekka said the Trustees decided to hire a bookkeeper; this function used to be done by Cindy. One of the Trustees is the treasurer and signs the checks, not the bookkeeper.

There is also a separate account for unanticipated funds such as fines, cost of book replacements, copier fees, and donations. The Trustees are required to spend these funds. There was a discussion regarding what these funds can be used for. She explained the difficulty in budgeting for this income.

Rebekka explained as well that library closure during the pandemic lead to decreased expenses this year but also a reduction in unanticipated funds. In addition, digital resources are expensive and are expected to continue in 2021.

Rebekka did not think extra funds could be moved and that has not happened in the past.

She explained that the Friends of the Library are a nonprofit and as such have their own account.

As far as library expenses are concerned, Rebekka explained that every 2 years, the firewall needs to be reviewed. She anticipates unspent budgeted money to be spent by the end of the year. Also, a new contract was signed with the internet provider where the cost decreased but the speed increased. However, the phone expense increased; after researching changing providers, it was decided this would not save the library money. The cost has also gone up for email as well.

Social Services

There are 2 services that will require a warrant article due to an increased budget request: One Sky and SoRock. There was no representative present for One Sky, but Charlotte Scott and Kelley Binette were present to discuss SoRock's services to the town.

Charlotte discussed the benefits provided to local youth through SoRock. The group was federally funded until last year when it aged out of its grant. They are now looking to towns for assistance.

Kevin asked what their proposed budget is, and Charlotte stated they are requesting \$6,333. Last year, they were budgeted \$3,000. She stated this dollar figure is not based on the town's population but reflects the cost of providing their services across the entire southern Rockingham county. Kevin asked for a copy of their financial statement. Charlotte confirmed their organization is a 501(c)(3) and stated their funding is heavily dependent on the government, but they also receive some donations. She stated she is the only paid employee and works part-time, and they have decreased staffing to keep costs down. She agreed to provide a financial statement to the Committee.

Heather provided information regarding the transfer of the budget for Child and Family Services (4445-19) to Waypoint (4445-27). The budget has not changed, but there is a different provider of these services.

She also provided information regarding the budget for Lamprey Health Care (4445-06). They previously provided transportation for local seniors but have discontinued this service. The budget for this service has decreased and has been transferred to Rockingham Nutrition Meals Transportation (4445-11).

Heather confirmed with One Sky that they have requested level funding for 2021.

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, 11/29/20, at 6:00 p.m.

Chuck concluded the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Prepared by: Marissa Federico